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Castro's Covert Action in Mexico

Following the recent visit to Mexico by Fidel Castro's confidant, José Luís Padrón (see the last issue of *EW*), the Cubans are stepping up the pressure on Mexico to maintain a stridently anti-U.S. position on Central America. Their efforts are enhanced by the fact that strategists of the ruling *Partido Revolucionario Institucional* (PRI) are planning to make anti-Americanism a driving theme in the campaign for the July, 1985 elections. *The climate is being created for a new wave of terrorist attacks on U.S. business targets in Mexico, and our intelligence sources report that the Cubans have renewed direct support to guerrilla networks inside the country.*

We are reliably informed that, in meetings with Castro and Manuel Piñero Losada (head of the Americas Department of the Cuban Communist Party) on his return to Havana from Mexico City, Padrón recommended aggressive measures to thwart any closer relationship between Washington and President Miguel de la Madrid. The new station chief of the Americas Department in Mexico City, Fernando Comas Pérez, was ordered to mobilize all available assets. Comas has been in frequent contact with Jesús Davila Narro, the Undersecretary for Political Affairs in the Ministry of Government, and with PRI party officials. Our sources believe that his influence may be reflected in recent statements by President de la Madrid attacking the U.S. support for the *contras* in Nicaragua and the anti-U.S. position adopted by party leaders such as Irma Cue, who has replaced the conservative Francisco Luna Kan of Yucatan as secretary-general of the PRI. In private conclave with party officials over the past few weeks, Irma Cue not only assailed U.S. actions in Central America but called for a grassroots campaign to build voter support for the PRI by exploiting anti-U.S. sentiment.

Seven governorships - as well as every seat in the national legislature - will be at stake in the July 1 elections next year. Though PRI control is not seriously threatened, the party's strategists are planning to discredit the main opposition group, the conservative *Partido de Acción Nacional* (PAN) by linking it to the Reagan Administration and its policies in Latin America. A major effort is under way to try to obtain documentary evidence of covert U.S. backing for the PAN. Officials at the Mexican Embassy in Washington, the Mexican Mission to the United Nations in New York, and the various consulates, have all been instructed to help. Humberto Hernández, the PRI's Secretary for International Affairs and a leading figure on the party's left wing, has been charged with coordinating this effort. Mexico's relations with the United States will therefore be central to the next elections. Legitimate business dealings between PAN supporters and Americans along the northern

border will come under intensive scrutiny and attack, especially in the states of Sonora (which has its gubernatorial election next year) and Chihuahua (where the governor's job falls open in 1986). The disinformation specialists on Fernando Comas's staff at the Cuban Embassy - which has been industrious in spreading fabrications to the Mexican press in the past - can be counted on to help produce apparent scandals.

New cover for Soviet spies

The recent decision by the Mexican government to approve the creation of a number of Soviet "Friendship Institutes" is another warning to the United States. The Soviets have long been pressing the Mexicans to approve the opening of a string of consulates in the north to provide diplomatic cover for cross-border espionage operations against the United States. The Mexicans have consistently refused, although last year - as first revealed in *EW* - they allowed the Soviets to double their personnel at their consulate at Vera Cruz, where two-thirds of the staff are believed to have intelligence functions. Until now, the Soviets have largely relied on commercial covers for their border activities (for example, bookstores in Ciudad Juárez). Now the de la Madrid administration has provided the KGB with new opportunities.

It is revealing that the latest "Friendship Institute" to be opened is in Mexicali, the capital of the state of Baja California Norte. Just a few miles from the U.S. border, Mexicali is second only to Tijuana as a favorite stop-off for U.S. citizens in Mexico, and is an ideal location for Soviet case officers to make contact with agents working on the other side of the border. It is disturbing to contrast this development, under President de la Madrid, with the success of the country's security chiefs, under the previous López Portillo administration, in preventing the Soviet espionage apparatus from establishing permanent bases in the north of the country.

Reviving the terror networks

The Cubans are pursuing a "two-track" policy in Mexico. In parallel with their efforts to influence the Mexican government through highly-placed agents of influence, they are again channeling support to guerrilla groups, including one that was involved in a planned uprising in 1970-71. Our intelligence sources say that Consuela Solís Morales, widow of the guerrilla leader Genaro Vásquez (killed in the mountains of Guerrero in the early 1970s) is playing a key role as an intermediary. The Cubans are now supplying money and guidance to a revolutionary Mexican teachers' movement, the *Movimiento Revolucionario de Maestros* (MRM) and to the heirs and survivors of the *Comandos Armados del Pueblo* (CAP).

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